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THE BILINGUAL INSCRIPTION FROM SARDIS

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At some time in the year 1916 there was published by the firm E. J. Brill, in Leiden, Vol. VI, Part 1, of the *Publications of the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis*.¹ The volume contains fifteen of the thirty-four Lydian inscriptions found in the course of the excavation, and also a Lydian-Aramaic bilingual. It is this last-named inscription which made the volume possible, since up to this time only a small part of the Lydian alphabet had been deciphered, and nothing at all was known about the language. Thanks to the presence here of half a dozen proper names occurring in both the Lydian and the Aramaic, a considerable advance is evidently possible. Littmann attacks the waiting problems with his usual acumen and thoroughness, and as a result has determined the majority of the Lydian characters, besides making many very interesting suggestions as to the meaning of recurring words and the signification of certain structural elements. It must be said, however, that beyond the proper names, one or two somewhat elusive particles, and the probable meaning of a few words and formulae (for most of the fifteen inscriptions here brought together are mortuary, and therefore bear a general resemblance to one another as well as to the fortunately preserved Aramaic), the language is still as much of a riddle as ever. It is not possible to read even a single sentence with certainty.

But my present concern is with the Aramaic part of the bilingual. My first acquaintance with it, or knowledge of its contents, came a few days ago (January, 1918) when Professor Butler very kindly sent me his own copy of the volume—one of the very few copies which are now in this country, the bulk of the edition being held in Leiden by reason of the war. At the same time he sent me a reprint from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXXVIII (1917), containing

¹ *Sardis: Volume VI, Lydian Inscriptions, Part 1.* By Enno Littmann. Pp. ix +85.

the first part of a review of Littmann's publication by Stanley A. Cook. As a matter of course I at first paid attention only to the excellent heliotype reproduction of the monument, casting no glance either at Littmann's conclusions or at Cook's comments until after finishing my own interpretation of the inscription.

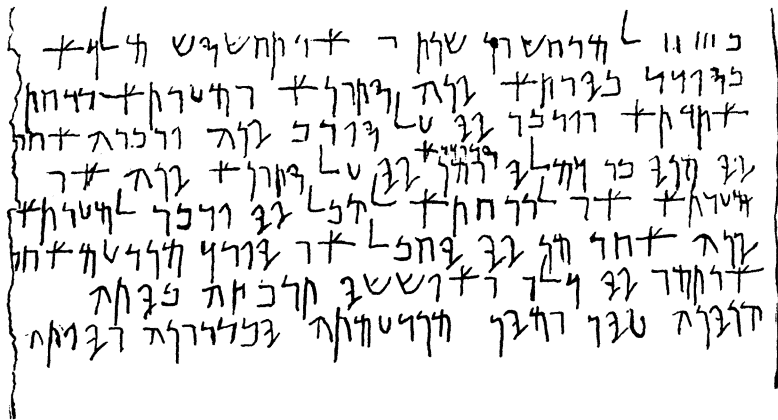


FIG. 1.—The Aramaic Text

The discovery of an Aramaic document of this extent, dated in the Achaemenian period, almost within sight of the Aegean Sea, is an event of great interest and importance. Hitherto the epigraphic evidence of the penetration of Asia Minor by the Aramaic language has included three inscriptions from Cilicia (see *JAOS*, XXXV, 371), a remarkable group from Arabissos-Yarapsun and Karaburna, in Cappadocia (*Ephemeris*, I, 59-74, 319-26; III, 65 f.), the lion-weight from Abydos on the Hellespont, a fragmentary bilingual from Lycia (*CIS*, II, 109), another from near Sivas (*Ephem.* II, 249 f.), and coins of Tarsus, Sinope, and Gaziura in Pontus. Students will look with eagerness to see what peculiarities, if any, in either script or idiom, are to be found in this new Western outpost.

The inscription presents in fact unexpectedly few difficulties, even in the proper names. The Hebrew-Aramaic name of Sardis, **סרד**, found in lines 2 and (probably) 3, has been familiar from the Old Testament, Obadiah, vs. 20, where the Greek has *Σαρδα*, *Σαφαραδ* (a later transliteration from the Hebrew), and several corrupt

variants. The correct identification, made chiefly on the basis of the Persian cuneiform inscriptions, in three of which the district *Sparda* is not only located in Asia Minor, but also placed next to *Iauna*, the "Ionians" (see, e.g., Schrader, *Keilinschriften und das A.T.* [1883], pp. 446 f.) would never have been questioned if the fact had

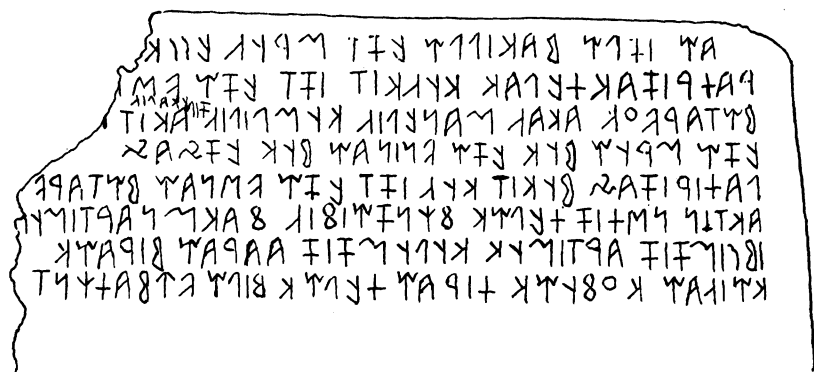


FIG. 2.—The Lydian Text

been more widely recognized that the Hebrew prophets, when they speak of "exiles," usually mean voluntary emigrants. The name of the goddess *Artemu*, *Artemis*, in line 7 was of course obvious at the first glance; and with this reading came also that of the two proper names immediately following, *Coloë* and *Ephesus*, especially since Pape-Benseler, *s.v.* *Κολόη*, makes reference to Strabo's statement regarding τὸ ἱερόν τῆς Κολονηῆς Ἀρτέμιδος μεγάλην ἀγιστείαν ἔχον. I also found Pape-Benseler ready with two of the proper names in line 4, giving *Μάννης* as occurring on a coin of Sardis (and *Μάνης*, *Μάνυς*, etc., as a common Phrygian name), and *Κάμβλης* as a Lydian name. To get light on the strange word written here above the line, it became necessary to consult the Lydian half of the inscription, where the corresponding word is also inserted between the lines as an afterthought. I subjoin a facsimile of the Lydian text, which will be seen to be very helpful for the control of the proper names: *Mane(lid)*, *Kumli(lid)*, *Siluka(lid)*, the last-named written above the line, in line 3; *Artimu-*, in line 6; *Ibši(msis)*, *Artimu(k)*, *Kulu(msis)*, in line 7. The very close relation of each of the

characters in these names to its corresponding letter in the Old Greek alphabet is at once apparent. For the attempt to identify the remaining characters and to interpret this document, the reader is referred to Littmann's admirable essay.

Of the several foreign words in the Aramaic, two are already familiar. **פִּרְבֵּר**, lines 3 (twice), 5, "ante-chamber, outer court," etc., occurs in Old Testament Hebrew, I Chron. 26:18; cf. II Kings 23:11; **סְתוּנָא**, lines 2, 4, "column, stele," is well known in neo-Persian and also in Syriac. No one could hesitate over either word in a preliminary reading, though doubts as to origin and orthography are possible, as will be seen. The word **דִּרְהַת** in lines 2 and 5 immediately suggested the Persian **دِراخت** *diraht*, "pillar," which might well be in place here. The first word in line 3, **אַחֲרֵתָא**, is quite new. For the rest of the inscription, lines 1, 7, and 8 (excepting the last word) could be dismissed at once as obvious and needing no further study.

I transliterate as follows:

1 ב 5 למִרְהֶשׁוֹן שְׁנַת 10 אֲרַחֲשֶׁשׁ מִלְכָּא
2 בִּסְפִיד בִּירְתָא זְנָה סְתוּנָא וּמִעֲרֵתָא דִּרְהַת
3 אַחֲרֵתָא וּפְרִבֵּר זִי עַל סְפִיד זְנָה פְרִבְרָה אַחַר
4 זִי מְנִי בִר כְּמִלִי סְרוּכִיא וּמִן זִי עַל סְתוּנָה זְנָה אִו
5 מִעֲרֵתָא אִו לְדִרְהַתָּא לִקְבֵּל זִי פְרִבֵּר לְמִעֲרֵתָא
6 זְנָה אַחַר מִן זִי יַחְבֵּל אִו יִפְרָךְ מְנַדְעִם אַחַד
7 אֲרַחְמִו זִי כְּלוּ וּמִפְשְׁטֵי תִרְבֻּצָה בֵּיתָה
8 קִנְיָנָה טִין וּמִן וּמְנַדְעֻמְתָּה יְבִדְרוּנָה וִיפְתָּה

Littmann's reading differs slightly from this. In line 3 he reads **אַחַר**, and prefers both here and in line 5 the spelling **פִּרְבֵּר**. In lines 2 and 5 he hesitates between **דִּרְהַת** and **רִדְהַת**, and in line 2 supplies the conjunction **ו** before the word and the letter **א** after it. In line 6 he reads **אַחַר** both times. His translation is the following:

1. On the 5th of *Marḥešwān* of the 10th year of King Artaxerxes,
2. in the city of Sardis. This stele and the cavern [and] the funerary
3. couches (?) and the fore-court which is above Sardis(?), this its fore-court, [they are] the property
4. of MNY, son of KMLY, of SRWK. And if anybody against this stele or

5. *the cavern or the funerary couches(?) opposite the fore-court of this cavern,*
6. *that is to say, if anybody destroys or breaks anything, then*
7. *may Artemis of K LW and of Ephesos with regard to his court, his house,*
8. *his property, soil and water, and everything that is his disperse him and his heir(s).*

Littmann comments on the surprising awkwardness of this, and is very severe on the Aramaic of the inscription, which he pronounces ungrammatical in the extreme, mixing genders and numbers repeatedly and using words in unheard-of ways. He explains this (p. 24) as due to two things, chiefly: (1) The inscription was rendered very literally from Lydian into Aramaic; the translator "seems even to have followed Lydian syntax mechanically." (2) The translator was ignorant of the Aramaic language, a fact which "is not so very much to be wondered at if we take into consideration the probability that nobody spoke Aramaic at Sardis."

I believe that Littmann is altogether mistaken in these suppositions. It is not antecedently probable that the one part of the bilingual is a rendering of the other. Where is the Semitic bilingual inscription, amounting to more than a bare name or two, in which the one text merely duplicates its fellow? Certainly the rule, illustrated by a host of examples, is that each version goes its own way without regard to the other. Moreover, in this very instance, such comparison of the two texts as can be made seems to me to show that they differed from each other very considerably. I am interested to see that Cook expresses the same opinion in his review. The very fact of the bilingual is evidence that Aramaic *was* spoken in Sardis. We have also the corroborative evidence of the Lycian bilingual (Greek and Aramaic) from Limyra, also a mortuary inscription belonging to about this same period. (In this also, by the way, the two texts do not correspond at all closely.) We must draw the same conclusion here as in the case of the bilinguals of Palmyra, Phoenicia, Egypt, Greece, Crete, Malta, North Africa, and other lands of the ancient world, namely, the fact of a mixed population. Travel was much freer and commerce and emigration much more extensive in this early period than our historians have been wont to recognize. I myself have believed for many years (I may be permitted to refer

to my *Ezra Studies*, pp. 153, n. 23; pp. 293–97) that colonies of Jews, emigrating chiefly for purposes of trade, were in all the principal cities of Asia Minor as early as the beginning of the Achaemenian rule.

If we could read the history of Phoenicia, Asia Minor, North Africa, and the Greek islands and shores in this early period, we should doubtless find that the waves of migration in the seventh century and thereafter carried some Jews to each of these regions, and to still others as well. . . . After the restoration of Jerusalem . . . the Jewish settlements in foreign lands grew steadily larger. These were the “exiles” of whom the Old Testament prophets are constantly speaking [*Ezra Studies*, p. 296].

Hence the allusion to Sardis in Obadiah, vs. 20, referred to above. But I have no doubt that other Aramaic-speaking sojourners, more numerous than the Jews, were in these cities of western Asia Minor.¹

As for the language of this inscription, I cannot agree with Littmann that it is ungrammatical or exhibits solecisms. Cook dissents in general from Littmann’s sweeping condemnation, but accepts his rendering with only the slightest change. I am not sure that my interpretation is the correct one, but it at least has the merit of supposing idiomatic Aramaic at every point. I should render as follows:

On the 5th of Marḥešwān, in the 10th year of King Artaxerxes, in the fortress Sardis. This is the stele and the tomb-cavern, the fire-pillar(?) and the vestibule, which are above Sardis. This is the vestibule of the descendants of Mani, son of Kumli, of the family of Sirūk. Whoever seizes upon this stele or the tomb-cavern, or takes away the pillar at the front of this vestibule of the cavern; whoever destroys or injures anything; Artemis of Koloë and of the Ephesians will take away his estate, his house, his property, soil and water; and everything belonging to him shall be scattered both for him and for his heirs(?).

The details of this document seem to me to be natural in all respects. At the time when it was composed we may suppose that the tomb-complex belonging to this family was the only one in this place “above Sardis.” Later others were added. Mani and Kumli were both extremely common names in the city (as we know), hence it was soon found necessary to designate the family more exactly

¹ We now have Aramaic inscriptions from the north, west, south, and center of Asia Minor, including seven provinces. No one of these documents is Jewish, but all are of distinctly Gentile origin.

by putting in the gentilic **סְרִינְיָא**, added above the line in both texts. As we well know, ancient burial properties frequently passed from one owner to another, either by legal transfer or by forcible appropriation. In the latter case the things to be seized would be precisely those named here: the tomb-complex, the stele with the inscription, and the fire-altar (if I have rightly understood the words) at the entrance of the vestibule. I add a few notes on the Aramaic, wishing that I had the leisure just now to carry them farther, since the whole document is to me one of extraordinary interest.

Line 1.—Unfortunately the paleographic evidence does not enable us to date the inscription with certainty. Littmann (p. 23) leaves open the choice between the tenth year of Artaxerxes I (455) and that of Artaxerxes II (394), and expresses no opinion as to the preponderance of evidence. Cook (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXXVIII [1917], 81 f.), whose judgment carries weight, thinks only of the two later kings of this name, thus making the date either 394 or 349. He argues from the forms of **נ** and **ה**, which seem to him to point to the neighborhood of 400 B.C., and from the fact that one of the Lydian inscriptions published here by Littmann (p. 55) and closely resembling the others is dated in the fifth year of Alexander. But the argument from the characters named seems to me hardly permissible. These very forms of **נ** and **ה** are to be seen in Mesopotamian documents dating from the end of the Assyrian period down to the early part of the Achaemenian rule, as may be seen in Stevenson's *Assyrian and Babylonian Contracts* and Clay's "Aramaic Indorsements on the Documents of the Murašū Sons," published in *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of W. R. Harper*, I. See Stevenson's Nos. 36 and 38 (reign of Darius I), and especially Clay's Nos. 22 and 29 (first and fifth years of Darius II); 5–13 (reign of Artaxerxes I), with admirable facsimile drawings. As for the date in the reign of Alexander, it must be remembered how stereotyped and persistent are the formulae of mortuary inscriptions; cf. e.g., the Tabnīt inscription with the Palmyrene epitaph (600 years later!) published in Clermont-Ganneau, *Études*, I, 121; Cooke, pp. 310 f. An alphabet like the Lydian could easily remain unchanged for many centuries, as might be shown by numerous parallels. My own first impression of the date of this Aramaic document from

Sardis, obtained solely from the paleography and made stronger by subsequent study, is that it belongs to the reign of Artaxerxes I, Longimanus. For the principal grounds on which this conclusion is based I would refer to my article, "An Aramaic Inscription from Cilicia, in the Museum of Yale University" (*JAOS*, XXXV [1917], 371). The characters most nearly resembling those of the Sardis monument are to be found in the Memphis stele (*CIS*, II, 122), dated in the reign of Xerxes, 482 B.C. (so Cook also remarks), the Yale inscription from Cilicia, just mentioned, the Assuan stele of 458 B.C. (seventh year of Artaxerxes I; *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*, I, No. 438),¹ the Abydos lion, the Limyra bilingual, and, in less degree, the other inscriptions named in my article, previously mentioned. I therefore believe that the Sardis monument dates from the year 455.

Line 2.—Is it quite true that *no* attempt is made in this inscription to distinguish ט from ט? Littmann pronounces the two letters "absolutely alike" (p. 26), and Cook says that they are "indistinguishable" (p. 82, top). It is quite true that under ordinary circumstances they are the same character, absolutely; but I think it can be shown that *wherever they are in juxtaposition* they are distinguished. This is done in three ways: (1) widening the head of the ט; (2) giving its shaft a downward slant toward the left; (3) making it shorter than the ט, in the time-honored manner. Methods (1) and (2) are both employed, unmistakably, in דרהח in line 2 and יבררהה in line 8; and apparently both in ספיר in line 3 (where the slant of the shaft, combined with the fact that the sequence פרב had just preceded, was probably what caused the absent-minded artist to finish the letter as ב). In בספיר, line 2, method (1) only is used; in לדררהח, line 5, only method (3). This is certainly not accidental. I have elsewhere (*JAOS*, XXXV, 373,

¹ The editors of the *Répertoire* (p. 335) suppose that the simplified forms of ט and י found on this monument had not appeared in Mesopotamia at this early date. But they are found there at least a century and a half earlier; see for example Stevenson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Contracts*, No. 23 (Assyrian period), cf. No. 7; also Nos. 36–39 (Darius I), and Clay's Nos. 2 ff. (Artaxerxes I). The fact is, these simplified forms appeared for a considerable time sporadically, interchanged with the older forms. After the beginning of the fourth century—judging from the meager evidence which we have—the simpler forms became universal in the Aramaic script. The boundary stone from Cilicia, published by Montgomery (*JAOS*, XXVIII, 164 ff.), shows an approximation to them. The inscriptions from Cappadocia mentioned above I should date, on the paleographic evidence, in the fourth century B.C. (Lidzbarski, *Ephem.* III, 66, decides for the second century, but with hesitation.)

n. 3) called attention to the way in which the Cilician coinage of the early fourth century, in the several types of coins containing the name **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** Datames, makes a clear distinction, but not always in the same manner, between the *juxtaposed* **𐤌** and **𐤌** (though no distinction whatever is made when they are not in juxtaposition). Here again there can be no question of accident.

𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍 is plainly the Persian *stūna*, neo-Persian **سُتُون**, neo-Syriac **ܣܬܘܢܐ**, "stele." It is naturally mentioned first, as the object on which this inscription stood. With the **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** *ustūdān*, "tomb," of the Limyra bilingual it has nothing to do. It is a little surprising that Cook should hesitate over the **𐤌** (instead of **𐤌**). In just this combination *st*, in borrowed words, the weaker dental frequently alternates with the emphatic. Compare **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** in the Elephantine papyri, **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** on the Abydos lion-weight, and Syriac **ܣܬܘܢܐ**, for *στατήρ*; **ܣܬܐ** for *ξέστης* (Fraenkel, *Fremdwörter*); **ܣܬܘܢܐ** for *στρατηγός*; **ܣܬܐ** for *στάσις*; **ܣܬܐ** for *ἄγρωστις*, and many others; also such words as **ܣܬܐ** for *ψαλτήριον* (Dan. 3:5, 10, 15).

The word at the end of the line can hardly be anything else than the familiar Persian *diraht*, "tree, pillar." There is not room for another letter after it, certainly not for an **𐤌**; it is probably in the construct relation with the word **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** at the beginning of the next line.¹ The latter I have supposed to be the Aramaic form of the old Persian *ātar*, *āthr*-, middle Persian *ātur*, "fire." The word would have been likely to receive the feminine ending for two reasons; fire is feminine in Aramaic, and it would be necessary to distinguish the word from the very common **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍**, "place." By "fire-pillar" I suppose to have been meant a round stele bearing a vessel with the sacred fire, which was kept burning at the entrance to the precinct. Strabo tells how the Persian religious practices had spread through Asia Minor, mentioning particularly Armenia and Cappadocia (xi. 8. 4; 14. 16; xv. 3. 5).² There is no need to supply the

¹ Did Littmann think of "couches" because of the **𐤀𐤃𐤌𐤍** mentioned in the Nerab Inscription I?

² If the character + could be regarded as corresponding to *th*, *θ*, we might suppose the Persian word to be preserved also in the Lydian, in *lathr*- (the photograph looks like *rathr*-) in line 2 and *lathir*- (Littmann takes no account of the *i*) in line 5. The identification of the character as *h* seems to rest entirely on Buckler's brilliant, but somewhat doubtful, discovery of *Ζεύς* *Υδηνός* in the Lydian (see p. 13).

conjunction ׀ before the word דררת; the manner of enumerating here is quite regular.

Line 3.—On the word אחרת see above, p. 193.

Instead of פרבר Littmann reads everywhere פרבר, following Andreas. But it is quite impossible to separate the פרבר of I Chron. 26:18 from the פרוּר of II Kings 23:11; and the combination of the two with the later Hebrew-Aramaic פרוּר and the Persian پَرَوَر *parvār*, all with the same meaning, is much too strong to be set aside by Andreas' suggestion. With the absence of a determinative ending for this Persian loan-word, both here and in line 5, compare זנה פתכר in the Yale inscription from Cilicia, dating from about this same time.

The construction at the end of the line is perfectly regular and classical. The suffix in פרבר is proleptic, the noun אחר is in apposition with the suffix, and in the construct state with the ׀ which follows. Concerning this variety of apposition see Kautzsch, *Gramm. des Bibl. Aram.*, § 88; Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebr. Gramm.*, § 131, *n*; Nöldeke, *Mandäische Gramm.*, p. 321. The use of the construct before the relative (or rather, *demonstrative*) ׀ is rare, but logical and permissible. In Hebrew the corresponding construction is common; cf. not only the examples in Gesen.-Kautzsch § 130, *c*, but also such cases as Isa. 43:21, עַם זֶה יִצְרַתִּי לִי, "the people whom I formed for myself." In Assyrian it is possible to say *tēm ša Arabi*, "the tidings concerning the Arabs" (Delitzsch, *Assyr. Gramm.*², § 98, *a*). Lidzbarski (*Ephemeris*, I, 68), observing this very construction (אנתה זי ביל, "the wife of Bēl") in one of the Aramaic texts from Cappadocia, calls it a "solecism." The stricture is not justified, however; the usage is probably a survival from an older stage of the language.

As for the use of אחר as a collective noun meaning "descendants, posterity," cf. the Nabatean inscriptions, *CIS*, II, 197, 198, 201, 206, 208, 209, 221, in all of which the term is used precisely as it is here, to designate the descendants of a man *who have property rights in his sepulcher*.

Line 4.—In the name written over the line I should not have ventured to read ׀ without the information given by Littmann. This name was presumably added later—perhaps much later.

Cook (p. 81) speaks of the final **ס** as "pointing downwards," but is he not thinking of the *Phoenician* form of the letter?

If I am not mistaken, we have a zeugma in lines 4-6, the verb **אָהַד** (beginning of line 6) being construed at first with **עַל**, in speaking of "taking forcible possession of" the inscribed monument and the tomb-complex, and then with **ל** (introducing the direct object) in line 5, where is mentioned the one thing which could be "*taken away*" and used elsewhere. For the use of **עַל**, cf. the Syr.-Hex. **אַחֲרָיָא** **עַל** **אַרְעָא** rendering *οἱ κραταὶ τῆς γῆς* in Ps. 46:10; also Arabic **ضبط على**, **قبض على**, etc., and in Hebrew **עַל** **הַחֹזֶק** in Job 18:9.

Line 5.—The use of the preposition **ל** with the word **דִּרְהַחַא**, although it had *not* been used with the **מַעֲרַחַא** just preceding, certainly indicates such a zeugma as I have supposed.

לְקַבֵּל זִי (פְּרַבֵּר זִנָּה) is another example of the archaistic construction which I have described in the note on the end of line 3. The noun **קַבֵּל** was originally construct with the demonstrative **זִי**: "at the front of this (namely)," etc. On **פְּרַבֵּר** without the determinative ending see above, on line 3.

Line 6.—**זִנָּה** is to be connected with **פְּרַבֵּר**, not with **מַעֲרַחַא**.

I read the verb **אָהַד** both at the beginning and at the end of the line. In the latter case notice the shaft of the final letter, comparing it with the **ד** in **דִּרְהַחַא**, line 2, and **יִבְרִינָה**, line 8. This form of the conditional sentence, perfect tense in both protasis and apodosis, is the typical form in all the Semitic languages, though very frequently varied. In the inscriptions known to us the imperfect tense is regularly used in the passages corresponding to this, where a curse is invoked on the one who violates the tomb. We may perhaps see a stylistic reason for preferring the perfect here; since the sentence is rhetorically improved by the use of the same word and form in both members, and the lack of concord in gender (**אָהַד אִרְחַמְרִי**) is most frequent when the simple ground-form of the verb, the perf. third sing. masc., is used.¹ As for the style of the inscription in general, it makes upon me the impression of a very respectable literary art.

¹ The tendency to use this ground-form, and the masculine in general instead of the feminine, is especially characteristic of Aramaic; "dahin geht eben der Zug der aram. Dialekte seit alter Zeit" (Nöldeke, *Mand. Gramm.*, p. 411); but cf. also the Hebrew usage, Ges.-Kautzsch, § 145, o.

The meaning of the verb פִּיר is apparently "injure, damage, do violence to." It has not been found hitherto in just this signification in Aramaic, the nearest approach to it being the too definite "break in pieces" (see Levy, *s.v.*, *pa'el*, and the corresponding Syriac usage). But in Assyrian we find it used repeatedly in exactly the manner of our inscription, in invoking curses on those who *damage* inscriptions, monuments, and the like. For example: I R. 27, No. 2, 64-66, "Whoever *does damage to* (*ipariku*) these inscriptions of mine, so that they cannot be seen and read," etc.; KB, I, 46 (Tiglath-Pileser I, Col. viii, 70-73), "Whoever in any way *injures* (*uṣapraḳu*) this memorial slab of mine," etc. This is our verb, beyond all question. Hebrew פָּרַךְ, Assyrian *pariktu*, "violence, force unlawfully used," should also be compared. The "slight and superficial knowledge" of Aramaic which Littmann (p. 29) would attribute to the author of this inscription is really our own; we know extremely little of the vocabulary of the language in its older history, and our acquaintance with its grammar and stylistic usage is very defective.

Line 7.—אֶפְסִי is not, as Littmann supposes, an adjective agreeing (or rather, disagreeing) with אֶרְחִי. This satisfies neither form nor construction. It is the masculine plural of the gentilic adjective with the determinative ending, to be vocalized (so far as we are able to judge) אֶפְסִי, "the Ephesians." This was ἡ Ἀρεμῖς Ἐφεσίων, just as in Acts 19:28, 34 (observe the absence of the article before the adjective, showing that the phrase was fixed in use). With the orthography compare the alternative endings אֶרְחִי and אֶרְחִי in the corresponding form in Bibl. Aramaic, and the writing עֶרְחִי (so Baer) in Ezr. 6:21 and 2 Chron. 32:13.

The noun תְּרִבְכָּ is especially familiar from the Assyrian *tarbaṣu*, "court, yard, garden," etc., but is also well known in Jewish Aramaic. This collocation, "his dwelling-place, his house, his property," was probably a phrase in common use.

Line 8.—The words טִין וּמִין (also a fixed phrase) suggest at once the similarly employed phrase לֶחֶם וּמִין, "bread and water," in the inscription Cooke, No. 145.

I cannot believe that מִנְדַּעְמַחָא, "anything," is *plural* number. In so regarding it Littmann is following the editors of the Elephantine

papyri (Bagoas Letter I, l. 12; II, l. 11; Strassburg Papyrus C, l. 13), but the singular number seems to me in all these cases far more probable. It is a very natural way of making a more distinctly substantive form out of the indefinite *manda'am*, and the use with a pronominal suffix is then a matter of course.¹

The word **יבריונה** is not, I think, correctly understood either by Littman or by Cook. The subject of the verb is the *indefinite plural*, which is used so extensively in Aramaic as a substitute for the passive voice. Thus, e.g., Dan. 4:13, "They shall change his understanding [=his understanding shall be changed] from that of a man to that of a beast"; vs. 22, "They shall wet thee [=thou shalt be wet] with the dew of heaven," etc. The suffixed pronoun, moreover, is not the direct object, but the indirect; the direct object is **מנדעמחה**. This wider use of the suffix to include what we should call the dative case, as well as other modifying relations, is found in all the Semitic languages, but especially in Assyrian, Ethiopic, and Aramaic. Dan. 5:6, "Then the King's countenance was changed [literally, it changed *for him*, **שְׁנוּהִי**]"—a good parallel to the Sardis passage. Compare in Syriac **ܫܬܐ ܐܢܝ**, "It happened *to them*," Luke 13:2 (both Lew. and Peš.).² Nerab Inscription II, 3, "He gave me [lit., *put for me*, **שְׁמִנִי**] a good name." In Hebrew, Zech. 7:5, **הַצֹּם**, **אַתָּה**, "Did you fast *for me*?"³ Isa. 65:5, "I am taboo *for you*," **קִדְשְׁתִּיךָ**; Job 31:18, **כָּאֵב**, **גִּדְלִי**, "He grew up *for me* as for a father"; Jer. 31:3, "I extended *for thee* (**מִשְׁכָּתִּיךָ**) my favor"—another close parallel to the phrase in our inscription. In Babylonian Assyrian a good many verbs not originally doubly transitive have come to be frequently or regularly construed with pronominal suffixes in this way; so that one says, e.g., "I took away *from him* (*ekimšu*) his

¹ In the use of the *masculine* singular verb **הוּה** with this word in the Bagoas Letter I, 12, I can see nothing surprising. This is a characteristic Aramaic usage (see the note above, l. 6, on **אַחֵר אַרְחָמִי**), especially when the verb is **הוּה**.

² Similarly in Persian we often find such constructions as Shāhn, vii. 57, **يكي دايه** **بودش**, "He had a nurse [lit., a nurse was (to) him]."

³ Wellhausen, *Kleine Propheten*, in *loc.*, says: "Es lässt sich nicht bezweifeln, dass **צִמְתָּם לִי** bedeuten soll **צִמְתָּם לִי**; aber was ist das für ein Hebräisch!" In view of all the excellent parallels we might well be content to say that it is very good Hebrew. The prophet should be permitted to write his own language, especially as our knowledge of it and its possibilities is so defective. Similarly, some of our commentators have wished to "emend" Dan. 5:6, Isa. 65:5, and Job 31:18, mentioned above.

chariots"; "A present he received *from them* (*imḥurušunuti*)"; " $\frac{1}{2}$ Mina of silver he shall weigh out *for her* (*išaḳalši*)," Hamm. Code 26, 10. Such usage develops naturally in all languages, being carried farther in some than in others. It was doubtless much more frequent in the North Semitic dialects, especially in the ordinary speech of the people, than our textbooks would lead us to believe.

If **וִירְתָּהּ** is the correct reading, the noun **יִרְתָּ** is certainly collective, "heirs," and there could be no objection to this. We should perhaps rather expect a word meaning "posterity" or "family," to be sure. Before reading Littmann's notes I had read the word **וִירְתָּהּ**, and even now I can see in the photograph nothing but **פ** as the middle letter. But as Littmann, working with the monument itself before him, saw only **ר**, I am doubtless mistaken. The reading with **פ** suggested nothing probable, either Semitic or Persian, though I had thought of several remote possibilities. One might think, for instance, of an Aramaic counterpart to Assyrian *aptu*, *apāti*, "house, people, family" (?), for which the root **וּפָה** (Aram. **יָפָה**) has been suggested.